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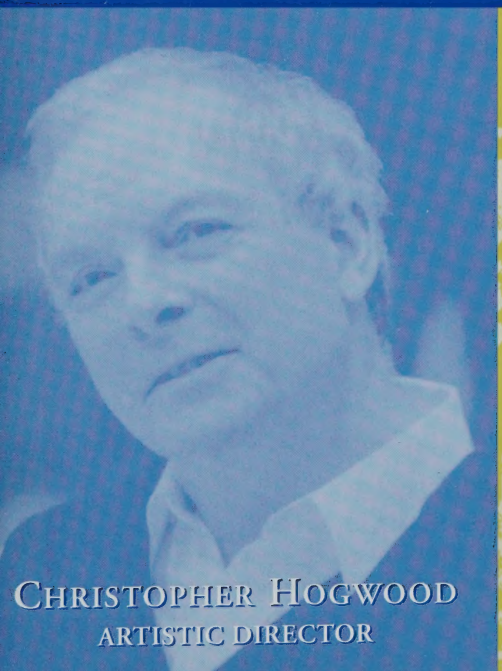

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H&H Contents

Vivaldi: *Gloria*

Board of Governors/
Board of Overseers 5

Program 7

Program Notes 8

Artist Profiles 11

H&H Orchestra Roster 13

H&H Chorus Roster 13

Text 14

H&H Educational
Outreach Program 18

H&H Administration 19

Vision Campaign 21

Annual Fund 21

Corporations and Foundations 25

The George Geyer Fund 27

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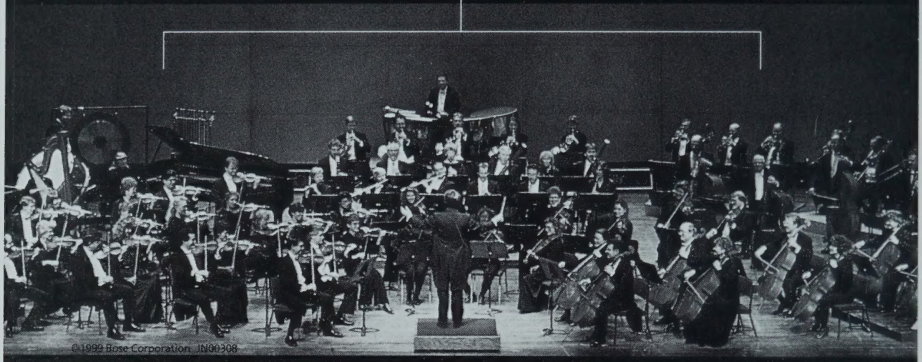

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Friday, April 6 at 8:00 p.m.
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Sunday, April 8 at 3:00 p.m.
Sanders Theatre

Handel & Haydn Society Chorus and Period Orchestra
Rinaldo Alessandrini, *conductor*

Sinfonie da Chiesa — Giovanni Bononcini [1670-1747]

Stabat Mater — Antonio Bononcini [1677-1726]

Pamela Murray, soprano
Judith Malafronte, mezzo-soprano
Ryan Turner, tenor
Donald Wilkinson, bass

— Intermission —

Gloria — Antonio Vivaldi [1678-1741]

Roberta Anderson, soprano
Gail Plummer Abbey, soprano
Judith Malafronte, mezzo-soprano

The program runs for approximately two hours.

The audience is respectfully asked to turn off all electronic watches, paging devices, and cellular phones during the performance.

Masters of the Italian Baroque

The brothers Giovanni and Antonio Bononcini were among the most popular composers of the eighteenth century, although few know their works today. They came from a highly-respected musical family, with a father who was famous as a composer and as a theoretician. His death orphaned his children at an early age, and the brothers seem to have looked out for each other throughout their lives. The elder brother, Giovanni, was something of a musical prodigy: at the age of fifteen he published three collections of instrumental music, and was promptly accepted into Bologna's famous *Accademia Filarmonica*.

Giovanni Bononcini is remembered today mostly for his later operatic rivalry with Handel during the 1720s in London.

Giovanni's big break happened in 1696 when his opera *Il Trionfo di Camilla* became the hit of the season in Naples. Shortly thereafter he joined the imperial court of Leopold I in Vienna, where he received an unheard-of salary of 5,000 florins a year. Soon his works were famous throughout Europe; in Paris he was regarded as the "modèle pour les gracieux." He brought his brother Antonio to join him, and they both flourished under Leopold and his successor Joseph I. The next Emperor was less of a fan, however, and by 1713 both brothers had returned to Italy.

Giovanni Bononcini is remembered today mostly for his later operatic rivalry with Handel during the 1720s in London, a competition that struck some onlookers as ridiculous: "Strange all this difference should be/Between Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee," as John Rowe put it in a couplet that was to inspire Lewis Carroll. But Giovanni's early instrumental works were far less *galant* than his later operas. The *Sinfonie da Chiesa* that he published in his late teens are models of early sonata form, all the more remarkable for being from the pen of a prodigy.

His younger brother remained in Italy, spending his last years in Modena where he became the *maestro di cappella* in 1721. Antonio's style is considerably more contrapuntally complex than his brother's, which may be one reason why his operas were less well-received during his lifetime. His compositional style was respected by the great master of counterpoint, Padre Martini, a scholar who even taught the young Mozart a thing or two. He judged Antonio's works to be "so dignified, artful, and pleasing, that he is distinguished above most composers of his time."

Antonio's setting of the great thirteenth-century hymn *Stabat Mater* was probably composed in the last five years of his life, just as Giovanni was entertaining London audiences with his tasteful arias. It opens in a mood of great desolation, with the falling figures that vividly convey flowing tears in the Baroque language of musical rhetoric. A soprano aria, full of rich contrapuntal lines, is followed by a duet for soprano and alto. The next chorus, to the text "pro peccatis suae gentis," is in the solemn *stile antico* style that was a mark of serious church music; in the middle of this movement, at the words

"vidit suum dulcem natum morientem," the chorus begins a slow canon between treble and bass, with sobbing repeated chords in the strings. The movement closes with a particularly somber drawn-out cadence.

Then follows a far more modern sound, as the principal violin plays an expansive obbligato to accompany the alto; the strings reinforce their duet with majestic dotted figures. In the second part of this aria the texture changes abruptly to match the urgency of "fac ut ardeat cor meum," and the alto sings elaborately "ardent" passagework. The chorus that marks the midpoint of the work is a particularly Vivaldian moment, as the strings outline the harmonies while the chorus delivers a straightforward prayer to the Virgin: note the wonderful harmonic swerve from B flat major to E minor and back again.

The second aria for alto is again with obbligato instruments, this time for the unusual combination of two solo violas and continuo. They provide a meditative background for the long phrases of the soloist. After a stately aria for bass accompanied by continuo, the chorus returns with another prayer to the Virgin, this time set to a festive dotted rhythm in the strings. Now the text changes, and the arias no longer describe the scene but each make a direct plea to the Virgin, with the beseeching imperative "Fac," or "Make it that..." The tenor aria is full of urgency, with eloquent appogiaturas on the word "passionis," while the chorus that follows is set in a broadly-sung plea from the chorus, as the orchestra answers with dramatic dotted figures; the second part of this movement is given over to solo episodes, first for alto and then for tenor, with the chorus answering "in die judicii," as the strings depict vividly the leaping flames awaiting sinners at the day of judgement.

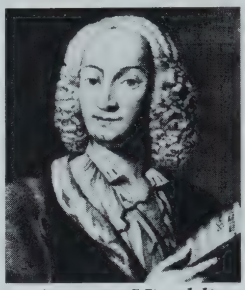
This mood of excitement is carried over to the bass aria that follows, as unison violins outline dramatic leaps. The work closes with a tremendous chorus that begins with a hushed *Largo* on the image of the death of the earthly body, followed by a fugue on the last two words: "paradisi porta." This begins lightly, with just chorus and continuo, then after an episode given to the strings, finally all the forces build the fugue up to a grand conclusion in the radiant key of C major.

The Venetian Angels: Music at the *Ospedali*

One of the obligatory sights for any eighteenth-century visitor to Venice was to attend a service (or concert – the two were often somewhat interchangeable) at one of the four *ospedali*. These Venetian institutions were originally set up to take in orphans and illegitimate children, but soon they developed a reputation as fine finishing schools. Their charges were especially well-trained in music. All the *ospedali* offered concerts (the Incurabili, despite its unfortunate name, was famous for its choir) but those of the Pietà, where Vivaldi was employed, were particularly renowned. The French jurist Charles de Brosses wrote to a friend in 1745 that "the transcendent music is that of the *ospedali* . . . they sing like angels and play the violin, the flute, the organ, the oboe, the cello, and the bassoon; in short, there is no instrument, however unwieldy, that can frighten them. It is they alone who perform, and about forty girls take part in each concert . . . There is nothing like the sight of a young and pretty nun in a white habit, with a bunch of pomegranate blossoms over her ear, conducting the orchestra and beating time with all the grace and precision imaginable."

-Robert Mealy

Although the brothers Bononcini were extremely well-known in their day, neither are among the more familiar names of the Baroque today. That is obviously not the case with Antonio Vivaldi, but while Vivaldi is well-known for his concerti, his church music is less familiar to most. One exception is his setting of the *Gloria,* RV589, which has become even better known recently through Mark Morris' striking choreography for the work. Vivaldi wrote at least two settings of the *Gloria* that have come down to us. This version was written in late 1716; we know the date because Vivaldi used the same music-paper for his oratorio *Juditha triumphans*, with which it shares certain unusual sequences. The Vivaldi scholar Michael Talbott has suggested that the festive and almost martial opening movement may indicate that the *Gloria* was intended for a service celebrating a Venetian victory over the Turks, especially since *Juditha* was composed for the same occasion.



Antonio Vivaldi

Where *Juditha* works an army of different instruments into its lengthy score, the *Gloria* is a masterpiece of economy and invention, with only one oboe and one trumpet along with strings. This instrumentation may stem from the fact that at this period San Marco had only one trumpeter on its payroll: was there only one good player for all of Venice at that time? Certainly all the other instruments in the orchestra would have been taken by Vivaldi's pupils, the *figliuole* of the Pietà. By this time the orphanage was proud to have a remarkable orchestra and chorus made up entirely (except possibly for that trumpeter) of women.

Though the *Gloria* uses a very restricted orchestra, Vivaldi manages to produce a wide array of striking effects with his limited means. The triumphant mood of the first chorus is dramatically contrasted with the following "Et in terra pax," where the strings provide a throbbing accompaniment to the long lines of the chorus, who move through several surprising changes of harmony before building up to a grand close. The "Laudamus te" that follows is almost a concerto for the two sopranos, who sing in close imitation. The chorus re-enters with a massive statement of "Gratias agimus," followed by an explanation of exactly why they are giving thanks in the "Propter magnam gloriam."

Then comes a particularly tender aria for soprano and obbligato oboe, a gentle *siciliano* of great beauty. This intimate moment is in sharp contrast to the chorus "Domine Fili," set *alla francese* to urgent dotted rhythms. The seriousness of this chorus continues with the alto aria, "Domine Deus," accompanied only by continuo; the chorus adds their supplications, and continue with a starkly homophonic setting of "Qui tollis peccata mundi." Another alto aria follows, this one illustrating its text "Qui sedes" as the voice "sits" upon the word for some three bars. The festive mood of the opening returns—along with the opening music itself—in the chorus "Quoniam tu solus sanctus." The work ends with a satisfyingly fugal setting of "Cum Sancto Spiritu," whose contrapuntal dexterity owes much to a *Gloria* from 1708 by G.M.Ruggieri, from which Vivaldi borrowed generously.

© Robert Mealy

Scholar and performer Robert Mealy has recorded and toured with many period instrument ensembles, including Sequentia, the King's Noyse, Les Arts Florissants, the Boston Camerata, and the Handel & Haydn Society.

H&H Artist Profiles

Rinaldo Alessandrini, *Conductor*

One of today's leading figures in early music, Rinaldo Alessandrini specializes in the repertoire of Monteverdi and Vivaldi. Recent and past conducting engagements include Handel's *Semele* at the 1996 Spoleto Festival, sacred works by J.S. Bach at Basilica di Santa Croce, and Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* with the Welsh National Opera of Cardiff. He was awarded the 1998 Gramophone Award for Monteverdi's *Ottavo libro de madrigali* with his period instrument ensemble, Concerto Italiano. Mr. Alessandrini has conducted a vast portion of the Baroque repertoire, often presenting his own revisions of works. Having made an in-depth study of the 16th and 17th century Italian repertoire, he and Concerto Italiano have been featured at numerous festivals including the Festival of Early Music of Utrecht, the Flanders Festival, the Festival International in Beaune, and various others in Paris, Barcelona, Milan, Washington, Tel Aviv, and Edinburgh. Recent recordings with Concerto Italiano for Opus 111 include Vivaldi's *Gloria* and *Magnificat*, and the Pergolesi and Scarlatti *Stabat Maters*. Mr. Alessandrini makes his H&H and Boston debuts with these performances.

Gail Plummer Abbey, *soprano*

Gail Plummer Abbey appears regularly with many of Boston's renowned music organizations. She has appeared as a soloist with the Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, Emmanuel Music, and Musicians of the Old Post Road. Her festival performances include the Spoleto Festival Dei Due Mondi, Aston Magna, and the Boston Early Music Festival. Ms. Abbey is a graduate of the Westminster Choir College, where she toured and recorded with the Westminster Choir, and had the opportunity to solo with the New York Philharmonic under the direction of Zubin Mehta. She has been a member of the H&H chorus since 1985.

Roberta Anderson, *soprano*

Roberta Anderson has been a frequent soloist in the Handel & Haydn chamber concert series, most recently in this season's Christmas program performing works of Monteverdi and Britten. Ms. Anderson has performed with numerous Boston ensembles including Emmanuel Music, Boston Baroque, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Cantata Singers, and many others. She has made appearances with the Boston Early Music Festival in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, the Aston Magna Festival in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, and in Germany with Concerto Köln in Bach's Mass in B Minor. Ms. Anderson can be heard on recordings for Harmonia Mundi, Erato, Koch, Telarc, and New World.

Judith Malafronte, *mezzo-soprano*

Mezzo-soprano Judith Malafronte has appeared with numerous orchestras and oratorio societies including the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, the San Francisco Symphony, the St. Louis and Baltimore Symphonies, Musica Sacra of New York, Seattle Baroque Orchestra, and the Handel & Haydn Society. She has sung at the Tanglewood Festival, the Boston Early Music Festival and is a frequent guest artist with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, the Dave Brubeck Quartet, and American Bach Soloists. Her operatic performances have included Handel's *Serse* at the Göttingen Festival, *Dido and Aeneas* with Mark Morris Dance Group, and Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* for the Aston Magna Festival. She has recorded for BMG, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, EMI, Koch Classics, and Harmonia Mundi USA. Her recording of the *St. Matthew Passion* with American Bach Soloists was released in November 2000 on the Koch label.

Pamela Murray, *soprano*

Pamela Murray has been a frequent guest of many of Boston's early music ensembles. Her oratorio credits include Bach's *Magnificat* conducted by Seiji Ozawa, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and Handel's *Samson* and *Solomon* with Emmanuel Music, Carissimi's *Jephte*, Faure's *Requiem*, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. Ms. Murray has appeared as soloist in Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, part of a touring program with the Handel & Haydn Society under the direction of Christopher Hogwood. Ms. Murray is a founding member of Favelle Lyrica, a Boston-based trio who's most recent CD, *A New Sappho*, on the KOCH International label, has received national critical acclaim.

Ryan Turner, *tenor*

Ryan Turner has performed to critical acclaim in oratorio, opera, and recital throughout the U.S. and Europe. He has been a featured solo artist with the Handel & Haydn Society, Emmanuel Music, Boston Baroque, Seattle Baroque, Kings Noyse, Ensemble Abendmusik, Boston Camerata, and Coro Allegro singing under such conductors as Grant Llewellyn, Paul McCreesh, and John Harbison. Mr. Turner recently recorded the role Metagenes in Kapsberger's *Apotheosis* with Ensemble Abendmusick. Mr. Turner is on the voice faculties of Boston College and Plymouth State College.

Donald Wilkinson, *baritone*

Donald Wilkinson enjoys a distinguished career in concert, opera, oratorio, and recital, and has appeared throughout the United States and Canada. In 1995 he made his European debut in the world premiere of Theodore Antoniou's opera, *The Bacchae*, at the Acropolis in Athens, Greece. Mr. Wilkinson has performed as soloist with Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Christopher Hogwood and the Handel & Haydn Society, and since 1984 has been a soloist in Emmanuel Music's Bach Cantata series under the direction of Craig Smith.

The Handel & Haydn Society

The Handel & Haydn Society is considered one of America's premier chorus and period instrument ensembles. Under the artistic direction of internationally renowned conductor Christopher Hogwood since 1986, H&H is a leader in historically informed performance. Each H&H concert is distinguished by the use of instruments, techniques, and performance styles typical of the period in which the music was composed. Founded in Boston in 1815, H&H is the oldest continuously performing arts organization in the country, with a long tradition of musical excellence. In the nineteenth century, the Society gave the American premieres of numerous important works, including Handel's *Messiah* (1818), which H&H has performed every year since 1854, Haydn's *Creation* (1819), Handel's *Samson* (1845), *Solomon* (1855), and *Israel in Egypt* (1859), and Bach's Mass in B Minor (1887) and *St. Matthew Passion* (1889). In recent seasons H&H has offered semi-staged productions of two operas by Handel: *Julius Caesar* with Sylvia McNair as Cleopatra and *Semele* with Meredith Hall in the title role. H&H's innovative educational outreach program brings the joy of classical music to more than 10,000 students each year in 50 public schools throughout Massachusetts.

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Joan & Remsen Kinne Chair
Jane Starkman
Krista Buckland Reisner
Judith Eissenberg

VIOLIN II

Julie Leven*
Dr. Lee Bradley III Chair
Lena Wong
Barbara Englesberg
Kinloch Earle

VIOLA

Laura Jeppesen*
Chair funded in memory of Estah & Robert Yens
Barbara Wright

CELLO

Karen Kaderavek *
Candace & William Achtmeyer Chair
Emmanuel Feldman

BASS

Michael Willens
Amelia Peabody Chair

OBOE

Sarah Davol

TRUMPET

Bruce Hall

ORGAN

Peter Watchorn

** principal*

H&H CHORUS

John Finney, *Chorusmaster*
The Cabot Family Chorusmaster Chair

SOPRANO

Gail Plummer Abbey
Roberta Anderson
Janice Giampa
Pamela Murray

ALTO

Marylène Altieri
Katharine Emory
Susan Byers Paxson
Kamala Soparkar

TENOR

Gerald Thomas Gray
Murray Kidd
Ryan Turner

BASS

Peter Gibson
Herman Hildebrand
Donald Wilkinson

The H&H Chorus is funded in part by a generous gift from the Wintersauce Foundation.

Giovanni Bononcini: *Stabat Mater*

Chorus

Stabat Mater dolorosa
juxta crucem lacrymosa
dum pendebat Filius.
Cujus animam gementem,
contristantem et dolentem
pertransivit gladius.

The grieving Mother
stood weeping by the cross
where her Son was hanging.
Her spirit cried out,
mourning and sorrowing,
as if pierced with a sword.

Aria (Pamela Murray)

O quam tristis et afflicta
fuit illa benedicta
Mater Unigeniti.
Quæ moerebat et dolebat,
Pia Mater, dum videbat
Nati poenas incliti.

Oh, how grieved and struck down
was that blessed woman,
Mother of the only-begotten Son.
How she mourned and lamented,
this Holy Mother, seeing
her Son hanging there in pain.

Duet (Pamela Murray, Judith Malafronte)

Quis est homo qui non fleret
Matrem Christi si videret
in tanto supplicio?
Quis non posset contristari,
Christi Matrem contemplari
dolentem cum Filio?

What man would not weep
to see Christ's Mother
in such humiliation?
Who would not suffer with her,
seeing the Mother of Christ
sorrowing for her Son?

Chorus

Pro peccatis suæ gentis
vidit Jesum in tormentis
et flagellis subditum,
vidit suum dulcem Natum
moriendo desolatum,
dum emisit spiritum.

For the sins of His people
she saw Jesus in torment,
beaten down with whips;
saw her gentle Son
dying in desolation,
breathing out His spirit.

Aria (Judith Malafronte)

Eia, Mater, fons amoris,
me sentire vim doloris,
fac ut tecum lugeam.
Fac ut ardeat cor meum
in amando Christum Deum,
ut sibi complaceam.

Let me, Mother, font of love,
feel with thee thy grief,
make me mourn with thee.
Make my heart so burn
for love of Christ my God
that it be satisfied.

Chorus

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
crucifixi fige plagas
cordi meo valide.
Tui Nati vulnerati,
tam dignati pro me pati,
poenas mecum divide.

Holy Mother, let it be
that the stripes of the crucified
may pierce my heart.
With thy injured Son
who suffered so to save me,
let me share His pains.

Aria (Judith Malafronte)

Fac me tecum pie flere,
crucifixo condolere,
donec ego vixero.

Let me weep beside thee,
mourning the crucified
as long as I shall live.

Aria (Donald Wilkinson)

Juxta crucem tecum stare
et me tibi sociare
in planctu desidero.

To stand beside the cross
and to join with thee
in weeping is my desire:

Chorus

Virgo virginum præclara,
mihi jam non sis amara:
fac me tecum plangere.

Virgin famed of all virgins,
be not severe with me now;
let me weep with thee.

Aria (Ryan Turner)

Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
passionis fac consortem
et plagas recolere.

Let me bear Christ's death,
let me share His suffering
and remember His blows.

Chorus and Solos
(Judith Malafronte, Ryan Turner)

Fac me plagis vulnerari,
Cruce hac inebriari,
Ob amorem Filii.
Inflammatus et accensus
Per Te, Virgo, sim defensus
In die iudicii.

Let me be wounded with His wounds,
let me be inebriated by the cross
and your Son's blood.
Lest I burn, set afire by flames,
Virgin, may I be defended by you,
on the day of judgement.

Aria (Donald Wilkinson)

Fac me cruce custodiri
Morte Christi praemuniri
Confoveri gratia.

May I be guarded by the cross,
protected by Christ's death,
nurtured by grace.

Chorus

Quando corpus morietur,
fac ut animæ donetur
paradisi gloria.

When my body dies
let my soul be granted
the glory of heaven.

Antonio Vivaldi: *Gloria*, RV 589

Chorus

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Glory be to God on high.

Chorus

Et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.

And on earth peace to men of good will.

Duet (Roberta Anderson, Gail Plummer Abbey)

Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te.

We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee.

Chorus

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

We give thanks to thee for thy great glory.

Aria (Roberta Anderson)

Domine Deus, rex cœlestis, Deus pater omnipotens.

O Lord God, heavenly king, God the father almighty.

Chorus

Domine fili unigenite
Jesu Christe.

O Lord, the only begotten Son,
Jesus Christ.

Chorus and solo (Judith Malafronte)

Domine Deus, agnus Dei, filius patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Lord God, lamb of God, son of the father.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.

Chorus

Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

Aria (Judith Malafronte)

Qui sedes ad dextram patris,
miserere nobis.

Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us.

Chorus

Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.

For thou alone art holy, thou alone art the Lord, thou alone, Christ, art most high.

Chorus

Cum sancto spiritu in gloria Dei patris,
Amen.

With the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the father, Amen.

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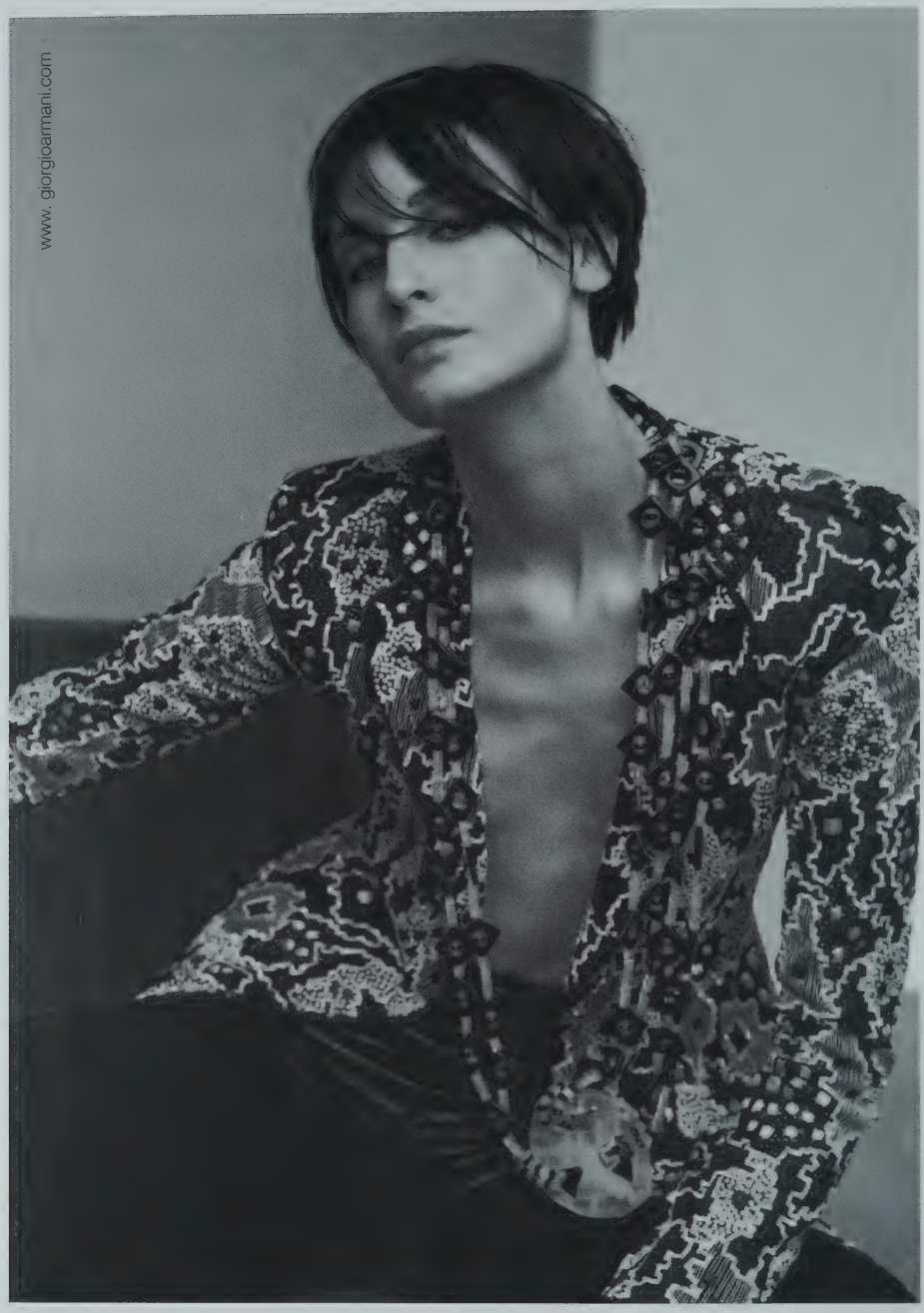

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